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SEP 29 '83

Remarks

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

Prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block before the American Association of Port Authorities in Seattle, Wash., Sept. 13.

This is an appropriate time for us to discuss exports of United States agricultural products.

Just three years ago some world trade forecasters were predicting a rapid increase—to $100 billion a year—in U.S. farm exports. This prediction was based on the solid foundation of growth from $8 billion in 1971 to $14 billion in 1977 to $44 billion in 1981. Tonnage over the wharf jumped from 64 million tons to 112—to 162.

The channel looked deep and clear.

Then we hit some uncharted rocks.

One jolt came suddenly with the ill-conceived Carter embargo on certain shipments of grains to the Soviet Union. Other shocks came more gradually, but each slowed our forward progress.

The U.S. dollar strengthened, making our products more costly in world markets. A global recession eroded our customers' purchasing power.

Governments in many of our customer nations invoked quotas and other import barriers against our farm products.

Grain suppliers from Argentina, Canada, Brazil and other countries rushed into the market vacuum caused by President Carter's embargo. Where we had been supplying over 70 percent of the Soviet Union's grain imports, our share of that market dropped to 17 percent. And massive subsidies by some countries—notably those of the European Economic Community—enabled these countries to under-price us, regardless of their actual costs of production.

Instead of our expected large increases in agricultural exports, we suffered decreases. I know some of you have been operating your grain handling installations at 50 percent capacity or less. We are now forecasting 1983 agricultural exports at about $35 billion, and at about 144 million tons.

In spite of this dip, I firmly believe that the $100 billion volume is attainable within the next 10 years.

We haven't been sitting around waiting for it to happen of its own accord. We've been out sweeping the channel. We've made some progress, and we plan to make a lot more.

I am particularly pleased to be able to tell you today about what we are doing to make this export market increase happen, and to thank you for your very meaningful assistance both past and future.

Just 19 days ago, I was in Moscow to sign a new long-term grain trade agreement with the Soviet Union. This agreement pledges the Soviet Union to purchase—and pledges the United States to sell—50 to 100 percent more U.S. grain than has been the case under existing short-term agreements.

This means an additional three million to six million tons of shipping which will pass over your wharves each year.

And the increase could well be much greater, because this new agreement is another important step in rebuilding our agricultural trade relationships.

Obviously, areas of tension remain between the United States and the Soviet Union. This grain agreement does not signal that there are no problems. But this is one important problem which we have solved, and it is to our benefit. The Soviet Union is our most lucrative market for grains.

Though this new agreement is important, it is just one of many positive steps we have taken to increase agricultural exports. These include:

— A new five-year textile agreement between the United States and the People's Republic of China. This provides for a two to three percent increase annually in the level of Chinese textile and apparel sales to the United States. This encouraged the Chinese to lift their ban on imports of U.S. cotton and soybeans. We hope they will also resume larger purchases of other agricultural commodities, particularly wheat. China has been our largest wheat customer in recent years, and prospects for growth in both wheat and corn sale appear bright.

— Export credit programs have been sharply expanded. We have made available over $5 billion for such programs in FY '83, compared to $2 billion in FY '82.

— A million ton wheat flour sale to Egypt was subsidized, not to encourage a trade war, but to emphasize that a battle of subsidies produces no winners.

— We have been giving serious consideration to lowering loan rates—consistent with authority provided in the legislation—so we can become more competitive in world markets.

— We have increased our export sales to Mexico. In 1982, Mexico purchased only 1 million tons of U.S. corn and sorghum. In 1983, thanks largely to her limiting other imports, Mexico is expected to obtain nearly 7 million tons of these two grains from the U.S.

— The United States is getting only about 10 percent of the world trade in high value agricultural products such as flour, meats, dairy products, vegetables and fruits. Recent studies indicate the average ton of agricultural exports from the EEC carries a value of $1,250, compared to $260 from the U.S. agricultural exports.

We are taking aggressive steps to increase this. We have plugged our Trade Opportunity Referral Service into the AGNET electronic information network, making possible same-day delivery and same-day response by U.S. agribusiness.

— We are increasing our pressure on restrictive trade policies which limit exports of high value products from the U.S. These involve negotiations with our two largest customers for U.S. agricultural products: the European Economic Community and Japan.

— We are adding additional power to our export promotion efforts. The opening of three U.S. agricultural export promotion offices in Beijing last fall—by the producers of wheat, feed grains and soybeans—have given the U.S. private sector an important new opening into the Chinese market. These offices came about as a result of our talks with the Chinese a year earlier. We have also worked closely with other producer groups on similar activities.

— We continue to administer a large program of food shipments under the P.L. 480 Food for Peace Program. In FY '83, this involved exports of nearly 3.78 million metric tons of agricultural products, valued at $1.04 billion. Major recipients are Egypt, Bangladesh and Pakistan. A total of 28 countries received aid. Over $40 billion in food has been exported under this program.

— The best way to be sure a customer buys your products is to be sure he can afford them. That's why our principal approach to reducing malnutrition in developing countries is to encourage economic development.

USDA has technical assistance projects on 76 countries. We have about 240 cooperative research projects abroad aimed at curbing crop diseases and building food production. Presidential Agricultural Task Forces have been sent to Peru, Guinea, Thialand, Honduras, Liberia and Venezuela to help these nations improve their agricultural production and marketing. The Caribbean Basin Initiative is another example of aiding the economies of developing nations.

USDA also encourages agribusiness to invest in developing countries. An agribusiness promotion council has been established to do this work in the Caribbean Basin. I can tell you that this work is going forward, and will produce results. In early August, I met with agriculture and trade leaders in five Latin American countries: Guatemala, El Salvadore, Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina. Representatives of U.S. agricultural export organizations and agribusiness accompanied me, and I am sure they felt their time well spent.

All of these activities reflect a deep-seated commitment on the part of President Reagan, myself and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help make our nation not only a reliable supplier of agricultural products—but also the best supplier.

All Americans have a stake in the health of the U.S. farm economy. More than 20 percent of U.S. jobs are directly related to the production, handling or processing of the food and fiber produced on U.S. farms. And no other U.S. field of endeavor matches the 150-million tons of agricultural freight which pass over your wharves each year.

At the same time, U.S. agriculture is dependent on you. A healthy U.S. agricultural economy must have exports. Big tonnages of exports: 65 percent of our wheat, 55 percent of our soybeans and 35 percent of our coarse grains are sent overseas.

There is a long history of harmony between us—between the government and the areas you represent. We have operated as a partnership. I know Martin Fitzpatrick and his Office of Transportation

co-workers appreciate the cooperation you have continuously demonstrated.

I have spoken of our commitment to be reliable suppliers of U.S. agricultural products to world markets. As you have read about or experienced our drastic weather this summer, I am sure you have occasionally asked yourself: "Will we have the products to sell?"

Yes, we will have the products to sell. Even though our payment-in-kind program brought about a sizeable reduction in planted feed grain acreage this year, and the drought has caused a further production decrease, we will have the products available to meet market demands both at home and abroad.

We had a lot of grain reserves on hand. We estimated we would have 150 million tons at the end of this crop year. That's 60 percent of the world's total supply. They were not secret: The whole world knew they were there. And they were hanging over the market as a giant depressant to the farm economy. Supplies will now be reduced, but we won't have to turn down any orders.

This points up our enormous capacity to produce. No other country in the world could come close to teaming up a big acreage reduction program with a major drought in the same year, and still have adequate supplies for sale.

In reality, we are the only supplier which can be relied upon to fill the world's growing need. Our rich soils, temperate climate, know-how and free enterprise incentive do not exist elsewhere in the world. It is a heritage we must protect.

I'm here to assure you we will continue to produce the goods. We will continue to be a reliable supplier, and to exert our efforts to expand those markets. And we will continue to be proud to work in close partnership with you, who operate the ports, which are the gateways to those markets.

#

USDA OFFICIALS MEET WITH LEADERS OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES

WASHINGTON, Sept. 9—The nation's historically black land grant colleges are a "valuable resource" to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in helping to "plan and execute truly effective projects overseas," according to Daniel G. Amstutz, USDA assistant secretary of agriculture for international affairs and commodity programs.

Amstutz keynoted a two-day meeting of USDA officials and representatives of the black land grant colleges held to explore ways of increasing the involvement of the colleges in USDA's international development programs.

The workshop is sponsored by USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development and the Department's Office of Minority Research and Teaching Programs, which is headed by Dr. Ezra A. Naughton. It is the outgrowth of the President's Initiatives on Historically Black Colleges.

Joan S. Wallace, administrator of the agency, said the workshop provides an opportunity for USDA to learn more about the resources and expertise available at the predominantly black land grant colleges. The colleges also can use the workshop to become more familiar with USDA international development programs, she said.

Workshop participants include Lincoln University, Alcorn State University, South Carolina State College, University of Arkansas, at Pine Bluff, Alabama A&M University, Prairie View A&M University, Southern University, Virginia State College, Kentucky State University, University of Maryland, on the Eastern Shore, Florida A&M University, Delaware State College, North Carolina A&T University, Langston University, Tennessee State University and Tuskegee Institute.

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USDA REVISES GRADE STANDARDS FOR FROZEN LEAFY GREENS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has revised the U.S. grade standards for frozen leafy greens to bring the standards into line with current marketing practices.

Charles Brader, a marketing official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the changes were requested by the frozen vegetable industry. The revised standards become effective Oct. 12.

The revisions combine the grade standards for frozen spinach with standards for other types of frozen leafy greens. Separate requirements for tenderness and texture of leaves and stems take into account the differences in varietal types.

"Pureed style" spinach and other "market accepted" types of frozen leafy greens are new forms of product which have been incorporated into the standards.

Allowances for damage to leaves caused by automated packing of leafy greens are provided. Brader said machine packing of leafy greens causes some cosmetic damage to leaves but does not affect the eating quality or nutritional value of the product.

The revised standards incorporate the attributes concept for grading rather than the previous system of numerical scoring of quality factors. The attributes concept classifies quality defects into the categories of minor, major, severe and critical. The number of defects in individual samples can not exceed specified limits, in each of the categories, for each grade.

To simplify the grade nomenclature, the revised standards eliminate the optional use of "U.S. Fancy" for Grade A and "U.S. Extra Standard" for Grade B.

The Agricultural Marketing Service establishes grade standards and provides official grading for many food products. Use of the grading services is voluntary and paid for by the user.

#

USDA INCREASES SOME FEES FOR COTTON TESTS AT CLEMSON LABORATORY

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed increases in fees charged for 18 of 64 cotton tests performed at the Clemson Laboratory.

Jesse F. Moore, cotton official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said "the fees for 8 tests would be increased by less than 10 percent and fees for 6 tests will be increased from 10 to 20 percent. The remaining 4 tests, which represent test methods little used by the public, will be increased by larger percentages."

"The increases are needed to bring the test fees in line with current costs," Moore said.

USDA also proposes to discontinue minimum fees for 9 items on the testing list, he said.

Comments on the proposed increases, which will be accepted by USDA until Oct. 13, should be sent to Harvin R. Smith, Cotton Division, AMS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

The proposal will be published in the Sept. 13 Federal Register and the new fees would be effective Oct. 15.

#

USDA SAYS ARKAN WHEAT WILL CAUSE CLASSIFICATION PROBLEMS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 13—Under the current U.S. Department of Agriculture standards, official inspectors will probably classify the hybrid wheat "Arkan" as a soft red winter wheat or mixed wheat rather than hard red winter wheat, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

Arkan, which is a cross between Sage, a hard red winter wheat, and Arthur, a soft red winter wheat, was released earlier this year by the Kansas State Agricultural Experiment Station as a hard red winter wheat.

"Arkan has visual kernel characteristics more closely representing those of its parent, Arthur, which is a soft red winter wheat," said Arnie Class, chairman of the board of appeals and review for USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service.

"It is important to understand that the grain standards describe the physical and biological properties of the grain at the time of inspection," Class said. "Under current standards, visual kernel characteristics are used for classing wheat because of the limited time permitted during the grading process. The procedure has been used successfully in both domestic and foreign commerce for several decades. No practical tests are known at this time that can be substituted in the grading system for visual identification of wheat classes."

Class said Arkan, marketed at locations receiving soft red winter wheat, would most likely be graded as soft red winter wheat because of its visual kernel characteristics.

"If Arkan is commingled with hard red winter wheat, the mixture would most likely be graded as mixed wheat," he said.

"For the purpose of orderly marketing, we believe wheat must continue to be classed on the basis of visual kernel characteristics until suitable replacement tests can be developed, accepted by the grain industry and integrated into the grading system," Class said.

#

USDA WITHDRAWS INSPECTION FROM TRENTON, N.J., MEAT PROCESSING FIRM

WASHINGTON, Sept. 13—Beginning Jan. 1, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will withdraw federal meat inspection services for 60 days from Fruscione's, Inc., Trenton, N.J., because of violations of the Federal Meat Inspection Act. The firm cannot operate without federal inspection.

"A USDA administrative law judge ordered inspection withdrawn from the plant for three years," said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. "Under a consent agreement reached between USDA and the firm, the remaining 34

months of the period will be held in abeyance so long as the firm does not violate the inspection law within two years.

"The USDA action was initiated after the firm was convicted in the U.S. District Court of New Jersey of preparing and selling mislabeled ground beef and short-weight roast beef products to institutions in New Jersey," Houston said.

On May 27, 1980, the court fined Fruscione's $4,000 for preparing and selling 200 pounds of mislabeled ground beef containing a soy derivative. Again, on Sept. 10, 1982, the firm pleaded guilty to selling short-weight roast beef products to Mercer County Corrections Center in Trenton and was fined $4,000.

Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act only wholesome, unadulterated and properly labeled meat products can be sold in interstate commerce.

#

USDA PROPOSES TO REDUCE FRESH WATER REQUIREMENTS FOR POULTRY CHILLERS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 14—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to permit poultry processors to replace part of the fresh water used to chill poultry carcasses with reconditioned water, provided specific safety standards are maintained.

Reconditioned water is water that is filtered or treated to keep bacteria levels low so it can be reused.

"The proposal would help conserve water and energy without adversely affecting product wholesomeness," said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. It would also reduce the amount of waste water being discharged into the environment, he said.

Processors immerse poultry carcasses in large tanks of chilled water immediately after slaughter to prevent spoilage. The chiller tanks are designed to quickly reduce carcass temperatures to 40 degrees Fahrenheit, which USDA requires to assure product safety.

Although the carcasses are washed before they enter the chilling system, they carry some bacteria that are washed off by the chiller water. To reduce the accumulation of bacteria in the chillers, current regulations require processors to add fresh water—one gallon per turkey and one half gallon per chicken. As fresh water enters the chiller, waste water is discharged.

"The proposal would permit poultry processors to reduce the amount of fresh water used provided the water is replaced by a greater amount of recycled, or reconditioned, water," Houston said. "The reduction allowed would be based on the effectiveness of the method used to treat the chiller water.

"The proposal does not specify the method of water treatment to be used, but rather sets standards for water quality that the treatment must attain," said Houston. "The standards ensure that the chiller water is at least as clean as current requirements provide.

"The agency has experimented with various methods of water treatment, including the use of diatomaceous earth filters to remove bacteria from chiller water," said Houston. "As a result, we know the standards are achievable." Poultry processors would be required to submit their proposed method of water treatment to USDA for approval.

A notice of the proposal is scheduled to be published in the Sept. 15 Federal Register, available at many public libraries. Comments should be sent by Nov. 14 to: Annie Johnson, Regulations Office, Room 2637-S, FSIS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service administers the Poultry Products Inspection Act which requires safe and sanitary slaughter of poultry to assure products are wholesome.

#

USDA PROPOSES CHANGES IN SWINE HEALTH REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 14—A U.S. Department of Agriculture official has proposed changes in federal regulations that would exempt

facilities feeding certain food wastes from licensing requirements of the Swine Health Protection Act.

John K. Atwell, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the proposal would permit feeding certain food wastes to swine without prior treatment, as is required by the act. It also exempts from licensing requirements those who otherwise would have to be licensed solely because they feed such products to swine.

"These exemptions affect only products that have no potential for transmitting certain exotic diseases that threaten the swine industry," Atwell said. "Our real concern is with garbage that could introduce such foreign diseases as foot-and-mouth disease or African swine fever, which are highly contagious and potentially devastating."

Atwell said the proposed exemptions would apply to bakery waste, candy waste, eggs, domestic dairy products—including milk, certain poultry and fish from specified waters.

Exemptions would include fish from certain inland U.S. and Canadian waters and from the Atlantic Ocean within 200 miles of the United States or Canada. Restrictions would still apply to fish from the Pacific Ocean and rivers flowing into it because they may contain San Miguel sea lion virus, which can infect swine.

Atwell said swine health protection regulations require garbage to be boiled for one-half hour under prescribed conditions before it is fed to swine. Facilities that handle such garbage must be licensed and inspected by federal or state officials.

Public comments on the proposed changes may be submitted until Oct. 17 to Thomas O. Gessel Director, Regulatory Coordination Staff, APHIS; USDA, Room 728 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md. 20782. The text of the proposal is scheduled to be published in the Sept. 16 Federal Register.

#

HIGHER INSURANCE GUARANTEES OFFERED PIK WHEAT FARMERS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 14—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation will support the payment-in-kind program again in 1984 by offering higher yield guarantees on insured wheat.

"The increase in yield guarantee is automatic for insured farmers participating in acreage reduction programs and involves no increase in premium," Merritt W. Sprague, manager of the USDA crop insurance agency, said today.

Yield guarantee is the amount of production the crop insurance agency will guarantee the insured farmers.

On most crops, the farmer has the choice of buying an insurance policy that guarantees 75 percent, 65 percent or 50 percent of the yield for the area. The farmer also may choose to participate in the agency's individual yield coverage program which customizes the policy based on the farmer's own production history.

If an insured farmer participates in USDA's acreage reduction program at the minimum 30 percent, the USDA crop insurance agency will automatically increase the yield guarantee by 6 percent.

If the farmer puts 30 percent of the acreage into an acreage reduction program, plus 10 percent into PIK, he/she will get an 8 percent increase in yield guarantee. If the farmer places 20 percent of the coverage into PIK, the yield guarantee increases by 10 percent.

"We see the increases in guarantee as a means for increasing participation and keeping currently insured wheat farmers in the program," said Sprague.

PIK sign-up begins Jan. 16 and runs through Feb. 24, 1984. Farmers can get full details on the 1984 PIK program from local offices of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

#

PARTIAL STERILITY CONTROLS INSECT PESTS FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15—Partially sterilizing male insect pests before releasing them to mate in wild populations is emerging as a new method of pest control, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said today.

Just enough gamma radiation is used on males to damage chromosomes, perhaps just a quarter of the dosage that would fully sterilize them and reduce their ability to compete with normal males for mates, said James E. Carpenter, an entomologist for USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Carpenter and co-workers found in experiments at USDA's Grain Insects Research laboratory in Tifton, Ga., that these treated males can mate successfully and pass the genetic damage to their offspring.

Reduction of pest populations from this genetic damage reaches full expression in the third or fourth generation, Carpenter said.

During the first three generations, he said, most of the insect pests inheriting these defects fail to survive to maturity and pest populations dwindle.

The relatively few insects that survive to the fifth generation are largely purged of the bad effects from the radiation, he said. At this point, populations rebound and a new round of treatment may be necessary.

Achieving partial sterility as a workable pest control had eluded USDA researchers trying to modify the conventional sterile-male technique, said Terry B. Kinney, Jr., administrator of the USDA research agency. Fully sterilized males were mass-released to wipe out the screwworm in Florida and the Mediterranean fruit fly in California.

But total sterility requires relatively high dosages of radiation for some species of insects, Kinney said. Such high radiation levels cripple the ability of treated insects to compete for mates in the wild; in fact, they can be lethal.

To overcome these drawbacks, Carpenter is studying the partial sterility technique. He has tested it on some of U. S. agriculture's most serious pests, the fall armyworm and corn earworm. These pests attack corn, cotton, sorghum and other crops, causing annual damage estimated at $500 million.

Partial sterility also is effective with less mobile pests, such as stored product insects, the European corn borer and the gypsy moth, Carpenter said. Gypsy moths devour leaves of trees in forests and woodlands throughout the Northeast.

According to Carpenter, radiation damage affects the numbers of eggs laid and hatched, the physiological ability to go through metamorphosis and such behavioral traits as competition for mates. The extent of these effects depends on the amount of radiation received by the insect.

In his research, the entomologist used a model to simulate release of nine times as many treated fall armyworm moths as were estimated to exist in the local wild population.

Carpenter concluded that partial sterility could be five to seven times more effective than complete sterility in controlling fall armyworms.

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USDA PROPOSES CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATION OF GRAIN INSPECTION SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking for comments by Nov. 15 on proposed changes to regulations covering the administration of USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service.

The changes include:

— Changing the administration regulation to clarify language and delete unnecessary language;

— Identifying the agency administrator's delegated responsibilities under the Agricultural Marketing Act;

— Deleting the term "regional office" and unnecessary wording and substituting the term "agency" for "official agency;" and

— Deleting all references to the administrative staff, and replacing them with references to the Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Kenneth A. Gilles, administrator of the agency said these changes are proposed because the Federal Grain Inspection Service no longer has regional offices and substituting the term "agency" for "official

agency" clarifies that the regulation applies to delegated states as well as designated agencies.

Details of the proposed rule will be published in the Sept. 16 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted until Nov. 15. Mail comments in duplicate to Lewis Lebakken, Jr., Regulations and Directives Management, USDA, FGIS, rm. 0667-S, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone: (202) 382-1738.

#

USDA MAKES NO CHANGES IN SPLIT PEA STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15—After a periodic review of the U.S. standards for split peas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has decided not to make any changes, a USDA official said today.

Kenneth A. Gilles, administrator of USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service, said USDA received only one comment on the standards—from an association which represents the U.S. dry pea industry. That comment agreed with USDA that the current standards meet the needs of the pea industry and no changes are needed now.

Gilles said USDA will continue to study and evaluate the standards to meet future needs of the industry.

The standards are reviewed at least once every five years to determine if there is still a need for them and to determine if they can be improved by incorporating grading factors or tests which better indicate quality attributes, Gilles said.

#

FY84 SUGAR IMPORT QUOTA SET AT 2.952 MILLION TONS TO BEGIN SEPT. 26

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15—The U.S. sugar import quota for the 1984 quota year will be 2.952 million short tons, raw value, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block announced today.

This is 150,000 tons larger than the quota for the 1983 quota year.

In addition, Block said, entries against this quota amount will be permitted beginning Sept. 26. The current quota, for those countries that have not filled their allocations, will remain open through Sept. 30, 1983, and any sugar entered between Sept. 26 and Sept. 30, 1983, inclusive, will be applied to the 1983 quota first.

The increased import quota reflects a careful analysis of the sugar needs in the U.S. market, Block said. "We feel that this quota will continue to protect our domestic producers while benefitting our consumers and foreign suppliers through increased shipments."

He said the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative is prepared to partially revise the quota allocations, reflecting, among other things, an earlier announced reduction of Nicaragua's share and the possible addition of two countries to the category of "other specified countries and areas."

Until this process is completed, the specific tonnages available to countries are not fixed, "but in no case, except for Nicaragua, will they be less than the levels permitted in the current quota period," Block said.

In announcing the earlier beginning of the quota period, Block noted that tightness occurs in the market at the end of any quota period. This tightness will be worse this year because Oct. 1 falls on a Saturday. He said this factor led to the decision to permit 1984 quota entries a week early. "It is expected that this will smooth the transition between quota periods," Block said.

Block said that should unforeseen developments occur, authority exists for changing the quota.

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USDA PROPOSES CHANGES IN PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS RULES AND POLICY STATEMENTS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 16—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed its fifth group of changes in regulations and policy statements during the regulatory review of the Packers and Stockyards Act.

"These changes will reduce the regulatory burden on the livestock and meat industry without lessening the protection afforded for producers, consumers and industry members under the P&S Act," said B. H. Jones, administrator of the Packers and Stockyard's Administration.

Jones said certain rules and policy statements will be clarified, and others which are outdated or no longer needed will be eliminated.

The proposal will:

— Remove a policy statement on packer purchases of livestock for export since this duplicates other federal laws;

— Revise a rule which prohibits packers and dealers from owning or financing selling agencies;

— Amend the rule concerning packer ownership of dealers or order buyers; and

— Retain in their present forms, a rule prohibiting exchange of buying information for the purpose of restricting competition, a rule which requires packers and dealers competing in the purchase of livestock to conduct their operations independently of one another and the rule which prescribes terms and conditions of credit sales of livestock to packers.

Five other policy statements pertaining to meat packers would also be retained in their present form.

Written comments will be accepted until Nov. 14, and should be sent to the Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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